

Policy title	D3 – Parent and Visitor Code of Conduct
Written by	Director of Governance and Admissions
Policy owner	Deputy CEO: Chief Operating Officer

Status	Approved
Summary of change	Nov 2022 – reviewed. Role titles amended only

Approval date	September 2019
Approval authority	Board of Trustees – Education and Standards Committee
Review date	November 2025

1. Introduction and purpose

- 1.1 The academies within the Trust are committed to a partnership between staff, parents and pupils/students to enable them to provide an outstanding education for children and young people. In order to achieve these very ambitious goals all parties must work together effectively at all times.
- 1.2 Each academy aims to be an orderly, safe place where relationships between staff and visitors, especially parents, demonstrate mutual respect and shared responsibility for pupils'/students' welfare and educational progress. Parental engagement is an important factor in educational success and in dealing with emerging problems at an early stage.
- 1.3 The purpose of this policy is to provide a reminder to parents, carers and other visitors to the academies in the Trust about expected conduct in order to maximise effective partnership working.

2 Expected behaviour and conduct

- 2.1 The Trust expects parents, carers and visitors to:
- Respect the caring ethos of the academy, underpinned by its core values;
 - Understand that teachers, staff and parents need to work together for the benefit of their children;
 - Treat **all** members of the academy community with respect and set a good example in their own speech and behaviour;
 - Correct own child's behaviour especially in public where it could otherwise lead to conflict, aggressive behaviour or unsafe behaviour;
 - Approach the academy to help resolve any issues of concern;
 - Raise concerns about the academy through the appropriate channels by contacting the relevant teacher, the Principal or the Chair of the Local Governing Body (LGB), so they can be dealt with fairly, appropriately and effectively for all concerned;
 - Contribute positively and constructively during meetings with academy/Trust staff or LGB members.

3 Behaviour and conduct which is not tolerated

- 3.1 **In order to support a peaceful and safe environment in each academy, the Trust will not tolerate parents, carers and visitors exhibiting the following:**
- Disruptive behaviour which interferes or threatens to interfere with the operation of a classroom, an employee's office, office area or any other area of the academy grounds including sports pitches;
 - Using loud or offensive language, swearing, cursing, using profane language or displaying temper;
 - Threatening to do actual bodily harm to a member of academy staff, Trustee, LGB member, visitor, fellow parent/carer or pupil/student regardless of whether or not the behaviour constitutes a criminal offence;
 - Damaging or destroying academy property;
 - Openly displaying disrespect to any member of academy staff or LGB member;
 - Making defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments in communication, either verbal or written (including emails, text/voicemail/phone messages or other written communication) to a member of staff or LGB member;
 - Making defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments regarding the academy or any of the pupils/students, parents, staff or LGB members at the academy on any social media sites (see paragraph 4);
 - Threatening a member of staff or LGB member either verbally or with written comments;
 - Using equipment to record conversations with members of staff and LGB members;

- Using physical aggression towards another adult or child. This includes physical punishment against own child on academy premises;
- Approaching someone else's child in order to discuss or chastise them because of the actions of this child towards their own child (such an approach to a child may be seen to be an assault on that child and may have legal consequences);
- Smoking and consuming alcohol or other drugs whilst on academy property.

3.2 Should **any** of the above behaviour occur on academy premises the academy may feel it is necessary to contact the appropriate authorities and if necessary, ban the offending adult from entering the academy premises (see paragraph 6).

4 Inappropriate use of social media

4.1 Any concerns that parents or other community members may have about an academy in the Trust must be made through the appropriate channels by contacting the relevant teacher, the Principal or the Chair of the LGB, so they can be dealt with fairly, appropriately and effectively for all concerned.

4.2 In the event that any parent/carer of a pupil/student at one of the Trust's academies or other community member is found to be posting libellous or defamatory comments on Facebook or other social media sites, they will be reported to the appropriate 'report abuse' section of the network site. All social media sites have clear rules about the content which can be posted on the site and they provide robust mechanisms to report contact or activity which breaches this. The Trust will also expect that any parent/carer, pupil/student or community member removes such comments immediately.

4.3 In serious cases the Trust will also consider its legal options to deal with any such misuse of social media and other sites.

5 Code of conduct during meetings

5.1 Meetings between staff or LGB members and parents/carers are an important aspect of the partnership to provide an outstanding education in the Trust's academies. Sometimes, the focus of these meetings will be on sensitive or emotive issues; therefore, to maximise the effectiveness of the discussions, the Trust expects meetings to be conducted as follows:

- The meeting will be held in a location which can enable confidential or sensitive issues to be discussed without undue interruptions;
- Each party is entitled to be accompanied by a representative if they wish (for example, a parent can be accompanied by a friend or legal representative, whilst a staff member or LGB member can be accompanied by a professional support representative such as a senior colleague from another academy in the Trust);
- As part of the Trust commitment to having a fully accessible environment for all, parents/carers who require reasonable adjustments to be made to fully access a meeting are requested to advise the academy when making arrangements for the meeting. The academy will consider the individual circumstances and advise the parent/carer prior to the meeting of the adjustments to be made, for example, the academy can take minutes of a meeting and provide these to the parent/carer.
- The use of equipment to record meetings is not permitted;
- A clear understanding by all parties of the objectives of the meeting should be established at the beginning of the meeting;
- Where appropriate, a maximum length of the meeting will be agreed by both parties at the beginning of the meeting;
- Each party should listen to the other party without interrupting unnecessarily;

- Each party will contribute positively to the discussions, focused at all times on reaching mutual agreement in order to seek a resolution;
- Using loud or offensive language or threatening behaviour will not be tolerated; the meeting will end immediately should such language or behaviour occur;
- Staff members will act in accordance with Trust policy C3 – Staff Code of Conduct at all times.
- LGB members will act in accordance with the Trust Code of Conduct for Trustees and Committee Members.
- It is recognised that there are occasions when it is not appropriate for the LGB Chair to meet with parents/carers, for example if a personal relationship exists. In these exceptional instances the matter should be discussed with the Director of Governance and Admissions who will advise on the procedure for the meeting.

6 Dealing with incidents

6.1 Incident report form

- (i) All incidents of abuse, threatening behaviour, violence (verbal and physical) or any other breaches of this Code of Conduct will be recorded in writing, ideally on the Trust's Incident Report Form (**Annex A**). A record of an incident (supported by any available photographs of injuries or damage, or relevant CCTV footage, where available or appropriate) will help in the collection of evidence where necessary (for example, for legal proceedings). Recording details of incidents also helps to inform the ongoing review and monitoring of this policy and future risk assessments.
- (ii) Any people who witnessed the incident should be asked to produce witness reports in writing as soon as possible after the incident. These should be signed and dated.

6.2 Access to academy premises

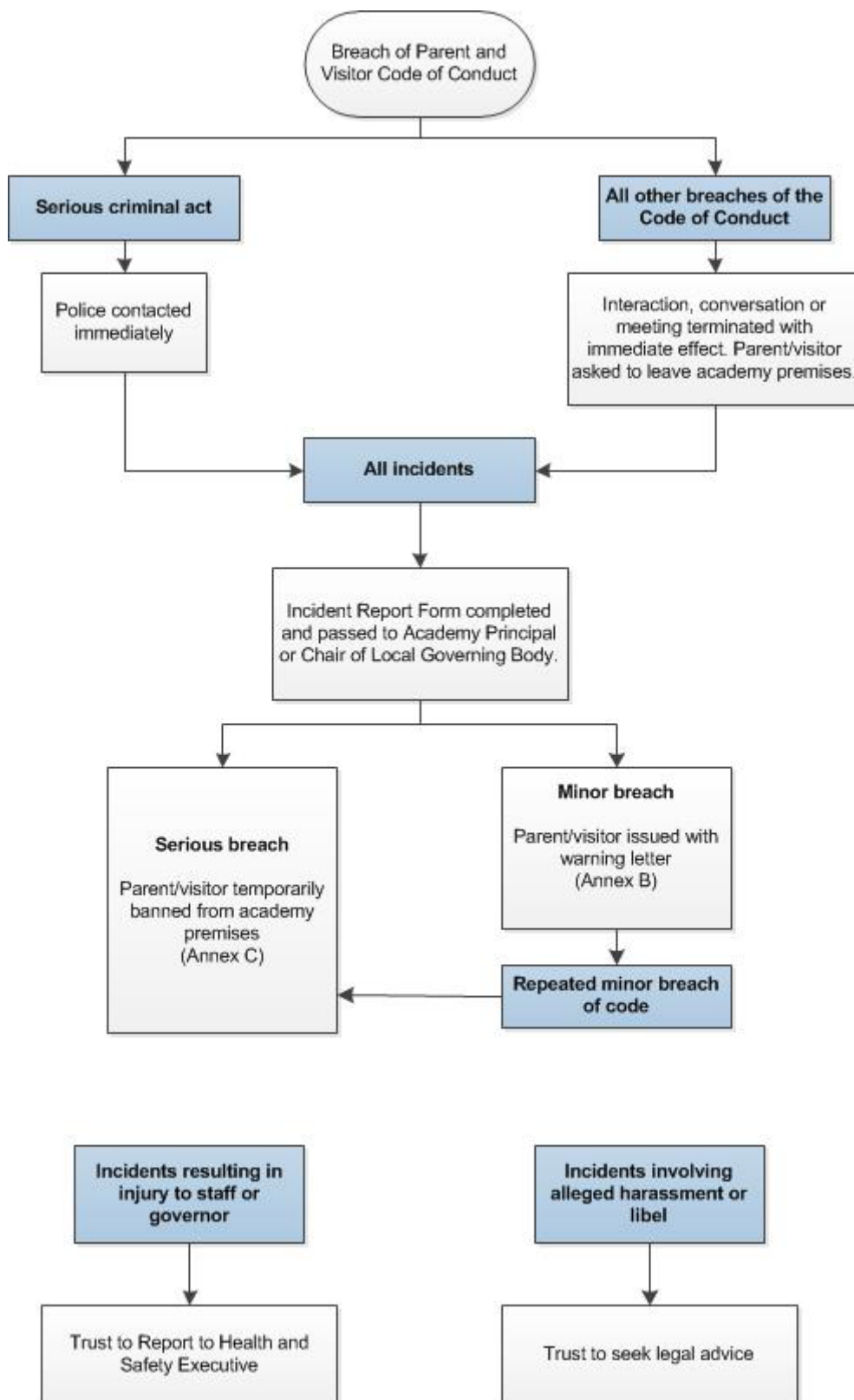
- (i) A parent/carer of a pupil/student at one of the Trust's academies normally has implied permission to be on the academy's premises at certain times and for certain purposes. However, this permission may be withdrawn – either temporarily or permanently - in instances of breaches of this Code of Conduct, in which case the parent/carer or visitor will become a trespasser.
- (ii) Section 547 of the Education Act 1996 makes it an offence for a trespasser on school premises to cause or permit a nuisance or disturbance, and allows for the removal and prosecution of any person believed to have committed the offence. A person who persists in entering academy premises and displaying unreasonable behaviour when permission has been withdrawn may be removed and prosecuted under Section 547.
- (iii) Model letters to parents or other visitors to academy premises whose permission is to be, or has been, withdrawn, are included in Annexes B – C. Where permission is to be withdrawn, the parent/visitor will be provided with an opportunity to make representations before finalising the ban.
- (iv) The letter should normally be sent by the Principal. However, it is recognised that there are occasions when it is more appropriate for the letter to be issued by a member of the Trust Executive Team and this should be discussed with the Deputy CEO: Chief Operating Officer.

6.3 Referral to external agencies

- (i) If there is an injury to staff or LGB member from an assault, the Trust may need to report the injury to the Health and Safety Executive under the requirements of the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013¹. This should be discussed with the Trust's Estates and Facilities Management Director in the first instance.
- (ii) The Trust may seek legal advice in instances of alleged harassment or libelous comments against staff members or LGB members. This should be discussed with the Trust's Director of Governance and Admissions in the first instance.
- (iii) Serious criminal acts will be reported immediately to the Police.

¹ Health and Safety Executive Guidance on reporting incidents in schools is available here: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/edis1.htm>

6.4 Summary of actions in responses to breaches of the Parent and Visitor Code of Conduct



7 Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The Trust's **Board of Trustees**, through its Education & Standards Committee, is responsible for the approval and review of this policy, and for monitoring the appropriate implementation of this policy.

7.2 Each academy's **LGB** is responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy in its academy.

7.3 The **Principal** of each academy is responsible for ensuring:

- that this policy is fully implemented in their academy;
- that all parents/carers, visitors and staff members are aware of and familiar with this policy;
- that an assessment of risk to staff and others from abusive or violent visitors is conducted where necessary;
- that personal safety training is available to staff.

7.4 **All parents/carers, visitors, staff members and LGB members** are responsible for familiarising themselves with this policy.

8 Monitoring, evaluation and review

8.1 The Education & Standards Committee, on behalf of the Board of Trustees, will keep this policy under review and ensure that each academy's practices are in line with this policy.

Annex A

Parent and Visitor Code of Conduct: Incident report form

This includes any behaviour or actions which are in breach of the Trust's Parent and Visitor Code of Conduct.

This form should be completed as fully as possible (please use a continuation sheet if necessary). For an incident involving or witnessed by a student/pupil, a member of staff should complete the form on their behalf. However, any discussion between one witness and another should not precede completion of the form, as this might lead to allegations of collusion.

Academy:			
Date of incident:			
Day of week:		Time:	
1. Member of staff reporting incident			
Name:		Position:	
Work address (if different from academy address)			
2. Personal details of person assaulted/verbally abused (if appropriate)			
Name:		Job/Position (if member of staff)	
Work address (if different from school address)/home address (if pupil/student)			
Dept/Section/Class			
Age:		Sex:	
3. Details of trespasser/assailant(s) (if known)			
4. Witness(es) if any			
Name			
Address			

Age (approx.):		Sex:	
5. Other information			
Relationship between member of staff/pupil/student and trespasser/assailant, if any			
7. Details of incident			
a) Type of incident	(eg. if trespass, was the trespasser causing a nuisance or disturbance and how; if assault, give details of any injury suffered, treatment received etc)		
b) Location of incident	(attach sketch if appropriate)		
c) Other details:	(describe incident, including, where relevant, events leading up to it; relevant details of trespasser/assailant not given above; if a weapon was involved, who else was present)		
6. Outcome:	(eg. whether police called; whether trespasser was removed from premises under section 547; whether parents contacted; what happened after the incident; any legal action)		
8. Other information (to be completed as appropriate)			
a) Possible contributory factors			
b) Is trespasser/assailant known to have been involved in any previous incidents	YES/NO		
c) Give date and brief details of (b) if known			
d) Had any measures been taken to try to prevent an incident of this type occurring? If so, what? Could they be improved?			

e) If no measures had been taken beforehand, could action now be taken? If so, what?	
f) Name and contact details of police officer involved, and incident number or crime reference number, as appropriate	
g) Any other relevant information	
Signed	
Date	

Annex B – Warning letter

Dear

Your conduct <<on academy premises>> on (insert date)

I am writing regarding an incident that took place <<on academy premises>> on (insert date) when you (insert details of the incident and its effect on staff, pupils/students, other parents).

[If you did not witness the incident they may wish to use the following text: I have considered the witness accounts of the incident, and it would appear (insert details of incident).]

Your behaviour falls short of the University of Brighton Academies Trust's Parent and Visitor Code of Conduct (see enclosed). I must therefore warn you that if you are involved in a similar incident again, you will leave me with no alternative other than to ban you from coming onto the academy site without my written permission.

I do hope that this will not be necessary and that I can rely on your cooperation in this matter.

Yours sincerely

Principal

Annex C – Temporary ban from site

Dear

Your conduct <<on academy premises>> on (insert date)

I am writing regarding an incident that took place <<on academy premises>> on (insert date) when you (insert details of the incident and its effect on staff, pupils/students, other parents).

[if you did not witness the incident, the following text may be used: I have considered the witness accounts of the incident, and it would appear (insert details of incident).]

Your behaviour falls short of the University of Brighton Academies Trust's Parent and Visitor Code of Conduct (see enclosed). I have considered the matter very carefully and have decided that you should not be allowed to enter the academy premises, unless for a pre-arranged meeting, from now until (insert date), when the situation will be reviewed. The withdrawal of permission for you to enter the academy premises takes effect straightaway.

(For parents/carers only) For the duration of this decision you may bring your son(s)/daughter(s) (complete as appropriate) to the academy and collect them/him/her (delete as appropriate) at the end of the school day, but you must not go beyond the school gate.

(In the case of infant children, also insert) Arrangements have been made for your (delete as appropriate) son(s)/daughter(s) (insert child/rens names) to be collected, and returned to you, at the school gate by a member of the academy's staff.

If you do not comply with this instruction I shall arrange for you to be removed from the premises and prosecuted under Section 547 of the Education Act 1996. If convicted under this section, you are liable to a fine of up to £500.

If you need to speak to me or a member of staff about this matter, please telephone the academy office and I will make the necessary arrangements and confirm them to you in writing. I also wish to give you an opportunity to give me in writing any comments or observations of your own in relation to the incident. These comments may include any expressions of regret on your part and any assurances you are prepared to give about your future good conduct.

I regret that I have had to take this action and hope that I can rely on your cooperation.

Yours sincerely

Principal